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Housekeepers' Chat Monday, May 26, 1930.

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

Subject: "Choosing China for Children." Approved by Bureau of Home Economics, U. S. D. A.

Leaflet available: "Good Food Habits for Children."

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The other day Rowena and I went shopping -- we were shopping for a certain kind of a china milk pitcher -- a very special kind of a pitcher, with a just-so handle. The handle had to be just so, because the pitcher was for a little child, who can not manage grown-up dishes.

Have you ever visited the children's section of a large department store? I mean the china section. It is fascinating. If all the obstreperous children who have such decided ideas about not drinking milk, and not eating cereal, could go to town, and select their own drinking mugs and porridge bowls -- well, maybe they would change their minds, and go in for such things as milk and spinach.

Rowena and I saw any number of captivating dishes, while we were on the quest of the china milk pitcher with the just-so-handle.

First, there was a delightful breakfast set, decorated with Uncle Wiggily and Grandpa Goosey Gander, skipping along, hand in hand, just as these two famous story-book people are wont to do. This particular set included a plate, a cereal bowl, and a mug. Nurse Jane appeared on this set, too -- Nurse Jane, Baby Bunting, and Bob Cat.

Do you know that Christopher Robin is now appearing in the chinaware sections -- on dishes made especially to tempt little folk? Christopher Robin and Winnie-the-Pooh, "the bear of very little brain."

As I told Rowena, I'd like to send a Christopher Robin set to my young nephew.

"Let's look at pitchers first," suggested Rowena. "There's a pitcher on the table over yonder, decorated with kittens. Shall we look at it?"

"Just a minute, Rowena. Did you see this perfectly charming breakfast set, for children who love cats?"

The plate of this set had a neat high rim, high enough to keep the oatmeal and spinach from spilling over. The plate was decorated with two cheerful pussycats, singing a gay song to the accompaniment of a cricket or grasshopper. The mug, just the right size for a child, had a spotted pussycat handle. The salt and pepper shakers were two mischievous kittens.

"If you like cats," I said to Rowena, "I've found just ~~the breakfast~~ set you want."

"But Aunt Sammy," said Rowena, in patient tones, "we are looking for a very special kind of a pitcher -- not a breakfast set. Will you please try to concentrate on china pitchers?"

We looked and we looked -- for it really was very hard to find exactly what Rowena wanted. Either the pitcher was too heavy, or the handle was too small or too large, or the design was too "fussy."

I wish you could have seen the charming child's set made by Italian potters. You know what kind of pictures a child draws, when he first begins to make pictures? Strange and unusual creatures they are -- reduced to the simplest terms. Two dots for eyes, one for a nose, and a little straight line for a mouth. The Italian potters have produced an original set, decorated with figures a child might have drawn. The figures in this particular set were grey-blue and rose.

"Lovely, as a Christmas gift," I suggested to Rowena.

"Yes," said Rowena, "but I am looking for a china pitcher. How about this one, Aunt Sammy? Do you think it is substantial enough for Junior?"

"Oh, that reminds me," I said. "Come over here, if you want to see something really substantial. This is from Germany. It's a semi-circular tray, made to fit under the wooden tray of a child's high chair. See here? It has a trough, along the inside, to catch crumbs and spilled milk. This knife and fork of stainless steel go with it -- the knife is rounded, and the fork has very dull prongs -- fine for children. The tray is made of enameled steel. Don't you like it?"

"Very much," said Rowena. "For durability, it's hard to find anything better than these enameled steel sets. Here's a plate, cereal bowl, and mug, in the same steel. It would take an extremely hard knock to chip a cup like this. Is there anything more you want to show me, before we attend to the main object of this shopping trip?"

Well, that reminded me that we really had started out to look for a china milk pitcher, and I began to concentrate.

"Would you mind," I asked, "coming with me to my favorite shopping center?"

Rowena said she didn't mind, I asked her to follow me, and pretty soon we were in the basement of my favorite store.

We saw any number of ~~pretty~~, inexpensive dishes, suitable for children - dishes with simple flower and fruit borders in gay colors - artistic designs which children will lean to appreciate, as they grow older. As Rowena said, it doesn't pay to overdo the nursery rhyme china - nursery rhymes should not be so entertaining that the child loses interest in the food.

And there we found a daffodil-color milk pitcher -- exactly the right shape, the right size, and the right handle. For a handle, to be managed by a child's chubby fingers, must be just so.

"Will you please tell me why," asked Rowena, while the salesgirl was wrapping the pitcher, "will you please tell me why you didn't bring me here in the first place?"

Well, that was rather a hard question to answer. I'm sure I don't know why -- unless it was because I had a subconscious desire to look at charming breakfast sets for children. And it's more fun to look at breakfast sets with some one like Rowena, who is interested in children, and likes the naughty ones just as well as the good ones.

I've told you about her leaflet, "Good Food Habits for Children." Perhaps you have a copy -- it's a mighty handy one to have around.

And speaking of food, and children -- let's see what the Menu Specialist has up her sleeve today. It must be a magic sleeve, for it never seems to lack a menu, when we need it. This one is a special spring supper, or lunch: Crisp Bacon; Spoon Bread; Cottage Cheese and Watercress Salad; Strawberries and Cream; and Chocolate Drop Cookies.

I'm glad she thought of Spoon Bread -- something a little different appeals to all of us on a day like this. I'm going to give you the recipe for Spoon Bread, just in case you don't have it. Six ingredients, for Spoon Bread:

1 cup corn meal
2 cups cold water
1 cup milk
2 or 3 eggs
2 tablespoons melted butter, and
2 teaspoons salt.

Do you have six ingredients? I'll repeat them: (Repeat).

Mix the meal, water, and salt. Boil for 5 minutes, stirring constantly. A cup of milk may be used in place of 1 cup of water. Add the well-beaten eggs, the milk and the melted butter. Mix well. Pour into a well-buttered hot pan, or glass baking dish. Bake for 45 to 50 minutes, at a temperature of 400 degrees to 450 degrees F. Serve with a spoon, from the pan or dish in which the bread is baked.

Once more, let's repeat the menu: Crisp Bacon; Spoon Bread; Cottage Cheese and Watercress Salad; Strawberries and Cream; and Chocolate Drop Cookies.

Tomorrow: "Shopping for Cretonnes."

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